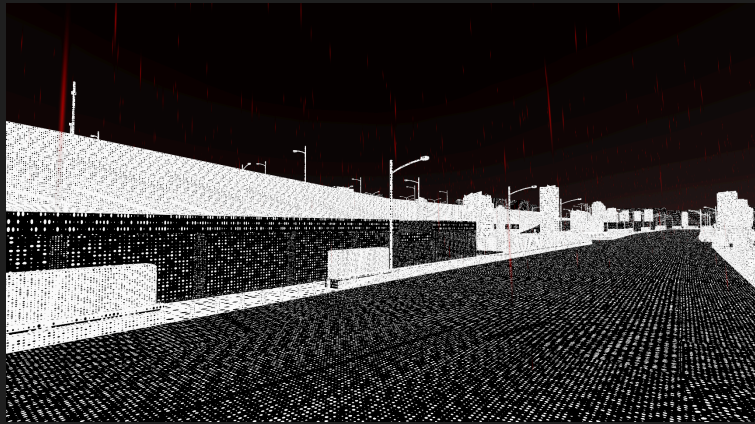


1. Game Overview



Title: The Red Rain Case

Genre: Detective Puzzle Game

Platform: PC (Unity)

Input: Mouse + custom pocket watch controller (Arduino) with a rotary encoder button on top that can click and turn in both directions.

Player Fantasy: Become the anthropomorphised manifestation of truth in the shape of a cosmic noir detective, who pieces together a mysterious case scattered through time, by exploring a single scene where the past, present, and future overlap.

Player Verbs:

- Control time: stop, rewind, fast-forward
- Investigate
- Deduce
- Solve

2. Core Concept

The player enters an open world where events, characters, and evidence from four hidden timeframes, and their 4 respective cases coexist and interweave:

- T-5: Five years ago
- T-1: One year ago
- T0: Present day
- T+1: One year in the future

The player investigates this environment filled with clues and characters, and uses their time manipulation powers to individually rewind, stop, or fast-forward chosen NPCs within the open world to reveal what they were doing, where they were doing it, and how they connect to the overall mystery.

The player's ultimate goal:

- Identify the four time periods (what years they correspond to).
- Assign each NPC and piece of evidence to the correct timeframe to solve the mystery.

Due to the player character being an embodiment of truth, their perception of other humans is entirely unbiased. This means that every NPC in the game looks and sounds the exact same.

3. Design Pillars

1. Fully autonomous player investigation

The Red Rain Case rejects guided mystery solving. There are no quest logs, no explicit dialogue clues, and no highlighted evidence markers. The game trusts players to watch, rewind, stop, and fast-forward time until they understand the truth on their own terms and at their own pace.

2. The concept of "Time" is the game's anchor

On a narrative, thematic, and aesthetic level, The Red Rain Case's depiction of time is malleable and abstract. Every character is frozen in time as rain falls around them, the world is a fractured mixture of 4 different timeframes, the player has the ability to affect the timelines of every character in the scene, and solving is entirely focused on a temporal reconstruction of events.

3. Lack of aesthetic bias

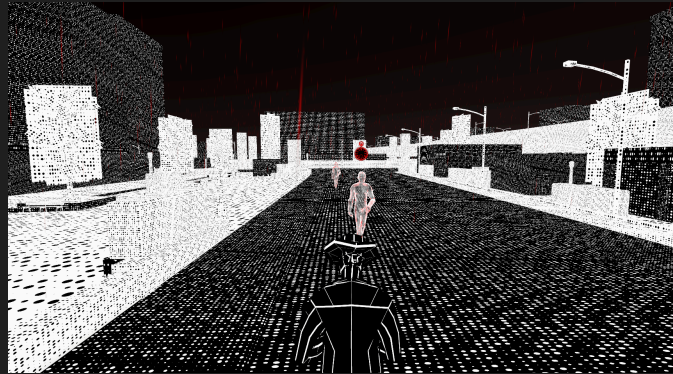
Due to the NPCs in the world all looking and sounding identical, the player is forced to approach every NPC with zero aesthetic bias. This means that their investigation is solely focused on the actions present throughout their timelines and how they interweave with other NPCs' actions. This is supplemented by the players not being given the NPCs' names either.

4. Open deduction and solving

Solving the case hinges entirely on player-driven reasoning, with minimal prompting or linearity in terms of solution. The player enters their solutions in a minimal clean and simple interface where they assign every NPC and piece of evidence to one of the four timeframes. The system doesn't push them toward a "correct" path; instead, it lets them build, revise, and test their theory freely. The game respects the player's own conclusions and only evaluates their final constructed solution per timeline.

4. Aesthetic Style

Visual Identity



The world is abstract with a heavy pointillist aesthetic. The environment is defined by a black and white dotted monochrome shader, while objects and characters of interest (i.e. that are interactable) are marked with a holographic red shader. The scene is also perpetually drenched in falling red rain that responds to the player's manipulation of time. The game's aesthetic gains an additional cinematic feel due to black bars at the top and bottom of the screen.

Audio Landscape

The music takes the shape of noir jazz with an emphasis on the trumpet, with the auditory identity prioritizing a melancholic, sharp, and haunting feel, echoing the game's central antagonist (a jazz musician who is known for playing the trumpet). As for sound effects:

- Ambient rain is ever-present, creating a sense of isolation and unease.
- Time manipulation affects sound directly:
 - When the world is stopped, the rain and music halt in eerie silence.
 - Rewinding distorts the rain and music into ghostly reversed echoes.
 - Fast-forwarding plays the rain and audio forward in an unsettlingly rapid tempo.

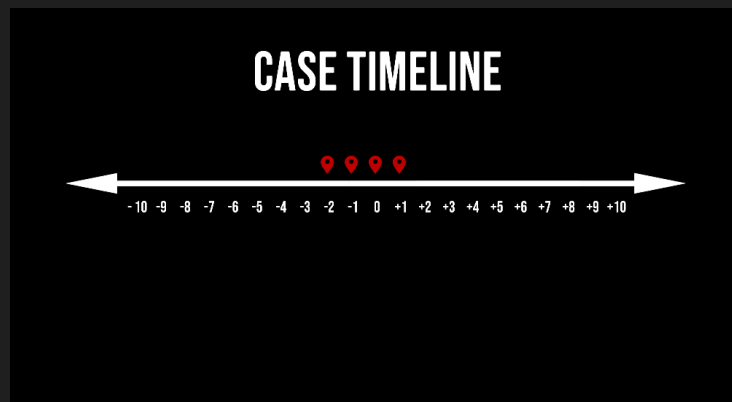
5. HUD & UI

Main HUD (Exploration)



- Bottom-left: Map / minimap.
- Top-right: Animated pocket watch showing time flow state.
- Above NPCs: Time manipulation icon when in range of the player.

Deduction Screen



The deduction screen is a singular timeline, starting from 10 years in the past to 10 years in the future. The player is presented with 4 points that they can move around, establishing the game's 4 timeframes. When the player discovers a new piece of evidence or a new character's timeline, they are then tasked with assigning it to its relevant timeframe through inference and analysis.

6. Player Progression & Win Condition

- Early game: Explore, meet NPCs, experiment with time manipulation to gather info.
- Mid game: Build a mental (and UI) map of which characters/evidence belong to which hidden year.
- End game: Fill out deduction UI fully and confirm theory.
- The game evaluates the player's choices based on each time frame. Meaning that when a certain time frame is accurately filled out, the game informs the player of that fact, and locks it. Thus lightening the player's cognitive load as a reward for accurate inference.

7. Potential Expansion

1. Saving and Loading (potentially having an object that the player interacts with in the world to indicate that they've saved).
 - a. Auto-saving
 - b. Multiple save slots (3 save slots, and one auto-save slot perhaps)
2. Full controller and glyph support (the game would recognise different controllers, support them, and change the game glyphs to reflect the controllers' respective inputs).
 - a. Allow players to rebind their controls
3. Adding more juice to stopping and unstopping time. Perhaps a strong and punchy visual effect, or the colors in the world inverting to highlight the erratic timeflow
4. Full voice acting and cutscenes (a 1000XResist style cutscene system where characters go through poses rather than fully animate, supplemented by an omniscient narrator speaking on the characters' behalf in a storybook-esque format)
 - a. An intro cutscene
 - b. An ending cutscene
 - c. A cutscene that players after players solve each timeframe (showcasing the events of said timeframe)
5. Publishing on Steam.
 - a. This could either entail publishing the game with its current scope, after adding the aforementioned quality of life and juice changes.
Or:
 - b. Adding several chapters/cases to the game, meaning that the current scope would just be one of several chapters.